



The Service Beacon

A monthly publication for FSIS field and headquarters employees.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

November 1998
Volume 2, Number 6

bea-con (bē-kən) *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or inspiration.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

FO and OM Organizational Changes

by Ron Hicks

Office of Management

Telephone: 202-720-4425

On October 1, 1998, Dr. Mark Mina and I announced several organizational changes within the Office of Field Operations (FO) and the Office of Management (OM). The following is a summary of these changes that should occur between October 1 and December 1:

- Field Automation and Information Management (FAIM) Staff, OM will merge with the Information Resource Management (IRM) Unit, Resource Management Staff (RMS), FO, and will be responsible for all FO computers and applications support.
- Budget and Finance Division, OM, will be split into a Budget Division (BD) and a Financial Management Division (FMD), within OM. The FO District Offices, Technical Service Center, and headquarters staffs will receive their budget analysis and support from the BD.
- Resource Planning and Financial Unit of RMS will

transfer to either BD or FMD, as appropriate.

- Workforce Analysis (WFA) Unit, RMS will remain in FO for the time being.
- Administrative Services (AS) Unit, RMS will be merged with and dispersed throughout OM, as appropriate.

Until approval of this reorganization package, the following will serve in an acting capacity:

Peter Kuhmerker, Director, FAIM Division, FO, reporting to John McCutcheon

Barry Blumreich, Deputy Director, FAIM Division

Ray Bolyard, Division Director, Budget Division, OM

Mike Zimmerer, Division Director, Financial Management Division, OM

This reorganization should improve resource management and computer support for FO field and headquarters components through the consolidation of similar functions.

During December, we plan to issue a directory listing all of the organization changes, relocations, and telephone and fax number changes.

TRAVEL

Mandatory Use of Government Issued Charge Card

by Barbara McNiff

Budget and Finance Division

Telephone: 202-720-3061

On October 19, the President signed into law the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998, which will require federal employees to use the government-contract charge card for official travel expenses. The General Services Administration (GSA) is expected to implement regulations under this law sometime in early 1999. The law is intended to maximize the use of the card since the Government gets a rebate on all charges made on the official government charge card. FSIS will issue revised procedures for the use of the travel card when GSA provides implementation guidance.

Travel Charge Card

by Sue Ayers

Budget and Finance Division

Telephone: 202-720-5068

NationsBank has advised the Department that they will begin mailing out Visa cards to USDA employees for official travel by November 15. Employees:

- (a) who presently hold a Government-issued American Express (AmEx) card;
- (b) who have a current AmEx account; and
- (c) who have been designated by their Program/Office to receive a Visa card should receive a Visa card shortly thereafter.

Upon receipt of the Visa card, the cardholder must (a) *read*, (b) *sign*, and (c) *return* the enclosed Agreement in the postage-free envelope provided.

Even though official charges cannot be made on the Visa card until November 30, it should be activated as soon as received. This is done by calling the toll-free number given and providing NationsBank with certain security information only known by the cardholder. This assures NationsBank that only the authorized employee received the card. It assures the employee that no one else can use the card issued in his/her name.

We suggest that cardholders cut up and destroy their AmEx cards on or after November 30 since no further charges can be made on them.

PROCUREMENT

I.M.P.A.C. Account Closure

by Janet Elm
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 202-720-0572

The current contract with US Bank (formerly Rocky Mountain) will expire on November 29, 1998. A new contract has been awarded to Nations Bank effective December 1, 1998. All accounts will be deactivated November 29, 1998, at 6:59 P.M. EST. If cardholders try to use their cards after this time, the charges will be rejected at the point of sale. Convenience checks must absolutely not be written after November 29. If checks are written

after November 29, they will be returned by U.S. Bank to the merchant/payee and you may incur insufficient fund charges and damage USDA's relationships with merchants/payees to whom you have written checks. Convenience checks payees should be encouraged to cash or deposit checks promptly so that the checks will clear through the old accounts as soon as possible. For those users connected to the Purchase Card Management System (PCMS), purchases made with the card should normally appear in within a few days of the transaction. However, check transactions may not appear for quite some time because checks can be negotiated (cashed or deposited) up to 90 days from the date of issue.

Delinquent U.S. Bank accounts (old paper system) should be resolved and paid by October 30, 1998.

All U.S. Bank I.M.P.A.C cards and convenience checks should be destroyed by cardholders after November 29, 1998.

Trailing I.M.P.A.C. Transactions

Cardholders should cancel all service and other expenses, such as online services and subscriptions that are automatically charged to their I.M.P.A.C. accounts on a regular basis. Many of these charges are not individually authorized by U.S. Bank once initial permission to charge to the account is granted by the cardholder. As long as the amount of the charge is under the merchant's floor limit, VISA regulations do not permit U.S. Bank to reject the charge, even if submitted by the merchant after November 29, 1998. If a recurring charge is submitted by the merchant after November 29, 1998, U.S. Bank will bill the first charge and advise the merchant that the account is closed. Any subsequent charges will be charged back to the

merchant, which could damage USDA relations with the merchant.

SUPPLIES

We've Moved

by Pete Bridgeman
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4222

Effective October 26, 1998, the Personal Property, Motor Vehicle and Supply Section (PPMVSS) is now located at:

USDA, FSIS, ASD, PPMVSS
MAIL DROP 5230
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVE
BELTSVILLE, MD 20705-5230

New phone numbers for the section are as follows:

Sue Miller
Supply Technician
301-504-4220

Brian McNiff
Property Management Specialist,
Vehicles
301-504-4221

Vikki Beaty
Property Management Specialist,
Field Offices
301-504-4223

Tammy Ladd
Property Management Specialist,
Headquarters
301-504-4227

Yvette Bamiro
Property Management Specialist
301-504-4228

Pete Bridgeman
Section Head
301-504-4222

Fax: 301-504-4231

The Toll-Free Number for emergency supply orders and inquiries will remain the same:

1-800-714-8335

1999 Canadian Export Certificates (FSIS 9135-3) Are In

The 1999 edition of the FSIS 9135-3, Canadian Export Certificates, are now in stock in Landover. The unit of issue is PKG25 (package of 25). All orders sent to Landover for these forms will now receive the 1999 edition. Please do not wait until the middle or end of December to order these, when it becomes an emergency need. Order them now.

If you still have need for the 1998 version of this form, just call the toll free number and we will have them sent to you. These will become obsolete on 1/1/99.

Correction - Ordering FSIS Form 2500-4

In the October issue of *The Service Beacon*, under "Smoking Policy - - Q & A", the first question asked, "Where can I obtain the Smoking Cessation Program Application Forms (FSIS 2500-4)"? The Answer stated that these could be ordered from Landover by calling 1-800-714-8335. This was incorrect. These forms are available from Landover, but they are to be ordered through normal ordering procedures. This toll-free number is for emergency orders and inquiries only, not for normal routine ordering of forms and supplies.

Stocking Up

Two recent orders received in Landover illustrate what *not* to do when ordering supplies from Landover.

The first order included 45 Print Cartridges and 120 Diskettes for a plant that had one computer. It would have taken years for one printer to go through that many cartridges. They would long since

have dried up and the printer become obsolete. These items alone represented \$1,852.00 worth of supplies. Also included on the order were 80 containers of hand cleaner pads, 24 cans of glass cleaner and 148 batteries, among other items. The total order cost was \$2,557.00. Further inquiry revealed that the night veterinarian was just trying to stock up on supplies. Reviewing that month's supply report, there were 11 different entire districts all of whose plants did not incur that amount of supply costs. Stocking up, indeed!

The other order was placed by a Relief Inspector for a plant he was covering at the time. There were 75 line items of supplies, forms, and specialty items. When the Inspector-In-Charge (IIC) returned to the plant and the relief inspector was gone, the supplies came in. Most of the items ordered were not needed at the plant at all. Over 6 cases of items had to be returned to Landover after many items were distributed all around the circuit. This took over 4 hours of the IIC's time, 2 hours of another inspector's time, and the cost to ship and return the items that could not be used.

The majority of Landover customers are doing a great job submitting appropriate orders, and the system seems to be working better than ever. We have taken the approach from the start that our field personnel are responsible, conscientious employees who will only order what they need to do their job. We have gone to great lengths to ensure we stock items that are needed in the field. When an item is brought to our attention that we've overlooked, we do not hesitate to add it to the stock if it proves to be a needed item. We've made it an "On-demand" system so you don't need to "stockpile" supplies every 6 months or a year. If we do run out of an item, we send it out on back-order as soon as it comes in. We've also tried to keep it as simple

as possible, and provide sufficient guidance, both in the catalog itself, and through pertinent articles in *The Service Beacon* and the Supply System Training Video.

When orders like these come to our attention, we will bring them to the attention of the District Manager and Circuit Supervisor for review. We do ask that you think about what you're ordering, and if you have any doubt or question about an item, call us on the toll-free number and we'll help you figure it out.

New Pathology Sample Kits

*by Pathology Technical Staff
Eastern Laboratory
Office of Public Health and Science
Telephone: 706-546-3556*

The Eastern Laboratory Pathology Section will begin using new pathology sample kits in FY1999.

Please continue to ship your samples in the boxes you have in stock. Do not ship all your boxes to the laboratory. We will replace the boxes as needed.

The new container with the yellow outer box will replace the old brown, blue, and gray shippers that have been used for the past 35 years. The new box is wax coated to facilitate the removal of previous shipping labels. The top of the box has been designated as the area for all FedEx labels. It has been designed to be the correct size for the placement of the 2-lb FedEx billable stamp receipt. The front of the box is printed with the name, location, and telephone number of the Eastern Laboratory.

The insert is made of Styrofoam. Holes have been precut to accommodate two jars of 10% neutral buffered formalin and a special trough for holding blood tubes. Instructions for sample collection have been printed on the inside of the box lid. Completed

forms, information sheets, and swabs should be placed in the head space above the insert. The box lid has been designed with side flaps to secure items placed in the head space. The box is designed to close upon itself to eliminate the use of rubber bands or tape for securing the box.

The laboratory staff requests that all personnel using these new kits to remember the following:

- Place the FedEx label on the top of the box within the preprinted brackets on the lid.
- Place any glass tubes in the special trough for protection during shipment.
- Please do not secure the boxes with tape. They have been designed to stay closed without the use of tape or rubber bands. Please let us know of any problems with boxes.
- Please do not remove the Styrofoam insert. It is made to fit securely in the box. Place forms, information sheets, and swab in the head space above the insert.

We have tried to incorporate features that will make the sample kits and boxes easier to use for field and laboratory personnel. Please contact us if you have any problems or suggestions.

Toll-free Number for Sampling Supplies

by *Arlene Peters*
Eastern Laboratory
 Telephone: 706-546-3576

The new toll-free number (1-877-709-1982) for requesting sampling supplies from the three field laboratories has been in use for almost 3 months and seems to be working quite well. Effective November 1, a fourth option will be available. By selecting 4, you can request sampling forms from headquarters in Washington, D.C. or

be added to the HACCP Salmonella Testing Program. If you want to request supplies and forms, you can access more than one mailbox by pressing 0 plus # to return to the main message. Your continued use of this new system is greatly appreciated.

For your convenience, Attachment 1 is a reprint of the Field Service Laboratories' Supply Line Message from the September edition of the *ASD Service Beacon* and includes the message for the new option 4.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Multi-District Safety and Health Committees Hold Initial Meetings

by *Tom Wright*
 Telephone: 202-720-3845
Harry Thompson
 Telephone: 214-767-9124, x-896
Roger Perkerewicz
 Telephone: 303-497-5411, x-247
Administrative Services Division

In October, two of the multi-districts conducted their first safety and health committee meetings since the June 1997 FSIS field reorganization. Representatives from the Dallas, Lawrence, and Springdale districts held their meeting on October 20 in Fayetteville, AR. This meeting was coordinated by Harry Thompson, Environmental, Health and Safety Branch (EHSB), Dallas, TX. The meeting of the Alameda, Boulder, Minneapolis, and Salem representatives was held on October 22 in Scottsdale, AZ. Roger Perkerewicz, EHSB, Boulder, CO coordinated this meeting.

These committees are comprised of an equal number of management and National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals representatives. The first meeting of the committees was devoted to administrative matters, available industrial hygiene

services, and safety and health issues affecting the districts. Tom Wright spoke about planned EHSB initiatives for fiscal year 1999, including the development of issuances and training instruments. A summary of the committee's meeting notes will be included in the December edition of *The Service Beacon*.

Personal Protective Equipment

by *Laurie Segna*
Administrative Services Division
 Telephone: 202-720-7773

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for personal protective equipment (PPE) are contained in Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subpart I of OSHA's general industry standards. These cover head protection, foot protection, hand protection, eye protection, and protective clothing. The original standards were adopted in 1971 from established Federal standards and national consensus standards. In 1994 OSHA revised the personal protective standards by adding a provision to the general requirements. The general requirements for PPE are found in 29 CFR Section 1910.132. Under the revisions, employers must select appropriate PPE based on the hazards present or likely to be present in the workplace. In order to determine if such hazards are present or are likely to be present, the employer is required to conduct a workplace hazard assessment. Based on this assessment, the employer must select, and have each affected employee use, the types of PPE that will protect them from the hazards identified.

In order to verify that the required workplace hazard assessment has been performed, the employer must prepare a written certification that:

- identifies the workplace evaluated;

- the person certifying that the evaluation has been performed; and
- the date(s) of the hazard assessment.

Employee training must include information from the hazard assessment covering such areas as when PPE is necessary, what type of PPE is necessary, and the limitations of the PPE.

The current FSIS directive that contains PPE requirements (4791.1) does not meet the revised OSHA regulation. Thus, we must develop a directive that will provide certifications that can be used to complete and document the hazard assessment. When developed, we will follow the established issuance process of obtaining review of both FSIS management and the employee organizations. We may be able to provide some of the PPE certifications on a national basis, while others may have to be location specific. This new directive will apply to FSIS employees in Federally inspected meat, poultry, and egg product plants as well as the three Agency laboratories.

Workplace Violence Assessment Team Telephone Numbers

by John Campbell

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 202-720-0541*

The Agency's Policy for Workplace Violence has been issued in FSIS Notice 39-98. The notice states that all reported workplace violence or potential incidents be reported to the immediate supervisors. The Notice also gave two toll free phone numbers for the Agency's Assessment Team, to call if satisfaction or resolution did not come from the supervisor or if you needed guidance in how to handle a particular situation. For inspection personnel, it was also suggested that you contact the 24-hour/7-days District Office phone coverage for

after hours or on weekends. At the time of distribution we did not have the phone numbers. Keep in mind these phone numbers may be subject to change, they are provided in Attachment 2 of this edition.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Pollution Prevention Accomplishments

by Kevin Dressman

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 202-690-1276*

On August 3, 1993, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12856: Federal Compliance with Right-To-Know Laws and Pollution Prevention Requirements, directing Federal agencies to reduce their consumption of toxic chemicals and apply the principles of pollution prevention to their facilities and acquisition activities. In September of 1994, the FSIS Pollution Prevention (P2) Strategy was established, which documents the Agency's commitment to reducing waste and promoting a healthy environment in all FSIS operations. Since most of the toxic chemicals are used by the laboratories, they are the focus of these activities.

A P2 Plan was developed for each of the FSIS laboratories outlining their program for reducing their use of targeted hazardous chemicals by 50% by the end of 1999 based on a 1994 baseline. Even though the Agency was not required to comply with all components of the Executive Order, we chose to voluntarily participate in the USDA Pollution Prevention Program to demonstrate the benefits of a successful P2 program. Many of the analyses performed by the laboratories involved large amounts of toxic chemicals. Through the evaluation and implementation of new or modified analytical technologies that use no or less

toxic substitute chemicals, the laboratories surpassed their reduction goal during 1997. Nevertheless, we plan to continue our program of P2 innovations to further reduce the laboratories' reliance of hazardous chemicals and lower new materials acquisition costs.

ISSUANCES

FSIS Issuance System-- Questions and Answers

by Mary Wissman

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 202-720-8287*

Q: What is the difference between a notice and directive?

A: The difference between the two issuances is the length of time that each is in effect.

A directive provides employees with instructions that continue in effect for an indefinite length of time or for a period of more than 1 year. A directive is considered a permanent instruction. It remains in effect until revised or cancelled.

A notice provides employees with instructions that continue in effect for a limited time period of 1 year or less. A notice is considered a temporary instruction. It expires within 1 year from the date of issue. A notice may be used to:

- Provide interim guidance until a more detailed directive can be issued.
- Give temporary information and instructions.
- Remind offices of periodic actions.
- Call attention to existing procedures or regulations.

What is not different between the two is the clearance and approval process! New or revised directives and notices are cleared through

deputy administrators and staff directors whose areas of responsibility are affected before signature. See FSIS Directive 2610.1, FSIS Issuance System, for exceptions to the clearance process.

Q: Who oversees issuing directives and notices?

A: There are two separate FSIS offices that oversee the issuance of directives and notices, as follows:

Directives Management Section (DMS)
Paperwork Management Branch
Administrative Services Division
Office of Management

Oversees administrative notices and directives (1000 through 4000 numbered series).

Regulations Development and Analysis Division (RDAD)
Office of Policy, Program
Development and Evaluation

Oversees program notices and directives (5000 through 12,000 numbered series).

Q: How is a notice or directive initiated?

A: Any FSIS office may initiate an issuance to provide written instructions for employees to implement Agency responsibilities, as follows:

Administrative Issuances. Send your draft issuance to Mary Wissman in DMS, Room 3808-South. Electronic submissions may be sent to the global address "Directives

Management Section" in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

Inspection-Related Issuances. Contact Lee Puricelli of RDAD at 202-720-0346. Lee will establish a workgroup to develop the program issuance.

Checklist 3-98 of Agency Issuances

FSIS Checklist 3-98 provides a listing of FSIS issuances and gives instructions for discontinuing issuances for FSIS use. Checklist 3-98 covers the third quarter of calendar year 1998 (July 1 through September 30, 1998). Copies have been printed and distributed to FSIS offices. An electronic version of Checklist 3-98 has been placed in the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

FSIS Checklists 1-98, 2-98, and 3-98 and the following notice(s) and directive(s) issued since September 30 provide a complete inventory of issuance activity since publication of the 1998 edition of the FSIS Directives Numeric and Subject Index.

Notice 38-98 (10/7/98)
How to Handle a Travel Audit Notice

Notice 39-98 (10/8/98)
Workplace Violence Policy
Statement

Notice 40-98 (10/8/98)
Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Open Season November 9 Through December 14, 1998

Notice 41-98 (10/8/98)

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season November 15, 1998, Through January 31, 1999

Notice 42-98 (10/13/98)
Federal Holidays in 1999

Notice 43-98 (10/13/98)
Special Provisions for the End of the Leave Year

Notice 44-98 (10/13/98)
Interview Policy for GS-13 Through 15 Positions

Notice 45-98 (10/16/98)
Contract Change for Travel Charge Cards

Notice 46-98 (10/19/98)
Revision to the Noncompliance Record (FSIS Form 5400-4)

Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the "PCDIALS" library in Opendedsk and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system.

Directives and notices are distributed automatically to applicable Agency employees and offices. Additional copies are available from the Printing and Distribution Section of the Paperwork Management Branch, Room 0157-S, 202-720-4661.

To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please contact:

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The current and past editions of *The Service Beacon* are available electronically on the FSIS OpenDesk and Exchange mail systems as well as on the FSIS Website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/OM/beacon.htm

ATTACHMENT 1

Field Service Laboratories Supply Line Message
1-877-709-1982

You have reached the sampling supply line of the USDA, FSIS field service laboratories. If supplies are needed for a specific sampling program, please refer to your sample request form, which identifies the appropriate lab to contact. After selecting the lab, leave your message to the tone.

For the Eastern Laboratory in Athens, GA, press **1**.

For the Midwestern Laboratory in St. Louis, MO, press **2**.

For the Western Laboratory in Alameda, CA, press **3**.

To request sampling forms from headquarters in Washington, D.C. or be added to the HACCP Salmonella Testing Program, press **4**.

You are requesting sampling supplies from the _____ Laboratory in _____. To correctly fill your request, the following information is needed:

- Your name and daytime phone number, including area code;
- The establishment number, including all letters, of the plant needing supplies;
- The program for which you are requesting supplies, such as 800 residue or MT 03 E. coli; and
- The type and number of supplies needed.

Your request will be filled as quickly as possible, and you will be contacted if we have questions. If you also need to request sampling forms, press **0** plus **#** to return to the main message. Thank you for using our PhoneMail™ system, and please leave your message at the tone.

Option 4

You are requesting sampling forms from the Office of Public Health and Science in Washington, D.C. To correctly fill your request, the following information is needed:

- Your name and daytime phone number, including area code;
- The establishment number, including all letters, of the plant needing forms; and
- The type of sampling form you need.

Please indicate whether your forms were never received or whether you have run out of forms. Your request will be filled as quickly as possible, and you will be contacted if we have questions. If you also need to request supplies, press **0** plus **#** to return to the main message. Thank you for using our PhoneMail™ system, and please leave your message at the tone.

ATTACHMENT 2

Workplace Violence Assessment Team Emergency Telephone Numbers

Alameda, CA	(05)	1-800 759-8888 (PIN 2027921)
Salem, OR	(10)	503-399-5831 (Voicemail will give pager number)
Boulder, CO	(15)	303-497-5411 (Answering service; pages person on duty)
Minneapolis, MN	(20)	1-800-923-9535
Des Moines, IA	(25)	515-278-9624 (After hours 515-727-8995)
Lawrence, KS	(30)	785-840-0020 (Answering service; pages person on duty)
Springdale, AR	(35)	501-751-8412 (Answering service after hours)
Dallas, TX	(40)	214-767-9116 (Answering service; pages person on duty)
Madison, WI	(45)	1-888-724-3212 (PIN# 300267) eff. 10/31
Chicago, IL	(50)	1-800-923-7163
Pickerington, OH	(55)	1-800-218-7345 (EJones) 1-800-231-8758 (JMercado)
Philadelphia, PA	(60)	215-597-7327 (Message identifies pager number to call)
Albany, NY	(65)	1-800-772-7033
Boston, MA	(70)	1-888-549-0305
Greenbelt, MD	(75)	1-800-338-8886
Raleigh, NC	(80)	1-800-846-3247 (Answering service; pages person on call)
Atlanta, GA	(85)	See Duty Roster
Jackson, MS	(90)	1-888-694-0419 (deMola); 1-888-291-9384 (JRoberts)
Omaha, NE		1-800-233-3935
Washington, DC		1-800-759-8888 (PIN 1130004)
Assessment Team		1-888-894-6217 or 1-888-894-5908